

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOT-00	DS-00
	DHSE-00	VCI-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCIE-00	NSAE-00
	ISN-00	NSCE-00	OES-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	MCC-00
	PM-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	MA-00	P-00	SCT-00	ISNE-00
	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00
	EPAE-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00
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 FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
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DEPT FOR AF/W AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2019  
 TAGS: [PBTS](#) [MCA](#) [EWWT](#) [PHSA](#) [BN](#)  
 SUBJECT: BENIN: PIRATES ATTACK TANKER IN GULF OF GUINEA

Classified By: Poloff: reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On November 24 at approximately 2:30 AM three Nigerian pirates boarded the 750-foot, Liberian-flagged tanker M/T Cancale Star in Benin's near international waters south of Cotonou, approximately 14 nautical miles offshore. Second in command Chief Officer Oleksiy Frolin was killed and three crew members injured. The dead and injured are Russian and Ukrainian. The Captain, Joroslars Semenovics, is Lithuanian. The ship had recently transferred crude oil to another vessel. There were no Americans among the 24 crew members.

¶2. (C) Poloff was first informed of the event while meeting with the Chief of Defense Staff with visiting Naval and Marine attaches (resident in Accra). During the meeting, the Beninese navy sent a small craft to board the vessel. The crew had already subdued one pirate and were moving the vessel from 18.5 nautical miles from the port to four nautical miles from the port to accommodate the range of the Beninese navy vessel. The other pirates fled the vessel at approximately 3:30 AM by pirogue when the crew sent a distress call. The tanker was too large to dock at the port of Cotonou and accordingly anchored offshore for the investigation.

¶3. (C) Attaches accompanied the Chief of Naval forces to the Cotonou Benin Navy Base; witnessed debarkation of the suspect and injured crew members; and spoke with a French naval officer (Frigate Commander Francois Marty -- posted to Benin for a French military cooperation program) who had boarded the Cancale Star with Beninese Navy personnel. The captain of the tanker provided a statement which the French navy officer shared with attaches. The ship was boarded by grappling lines via the poop deck. The pirates robbed the captain's safe while holding the ship's Second Officer Rizkovs at gun point. The captain reported that several crew members, including himself, had been bound and laid on the floor. At 2:53 AM Chief Officer Oliksiy was killed by one sh?)/`QQ,6de by the public prosecutor. END COMMENT.

KNIGHT